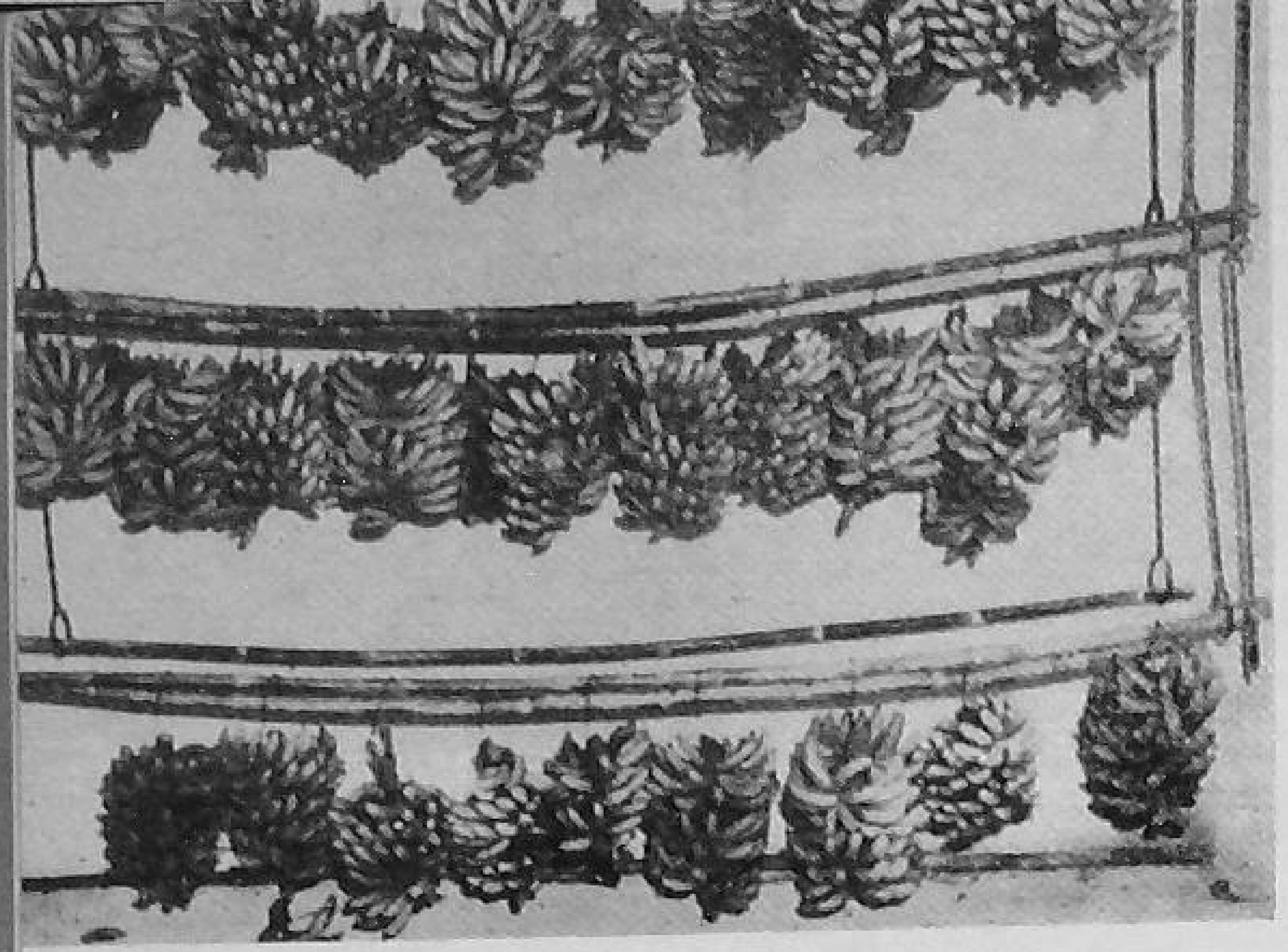
3685

Panchayati Raj

APRIL 1964

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, RURAL EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE
-5 MAY 1964
T. KALLUPATTI

A is our great Foreign Ex-Earner. As a result of the Programme, its cultivation ived a great impetus during years, especially in Gujarat harashtra. Seen in the picture K. M. Patil, Vice-President, shad and Chairman, Fruit Co-operative Federation, in Maharashtra, handling a bunch of bananas in his fields.

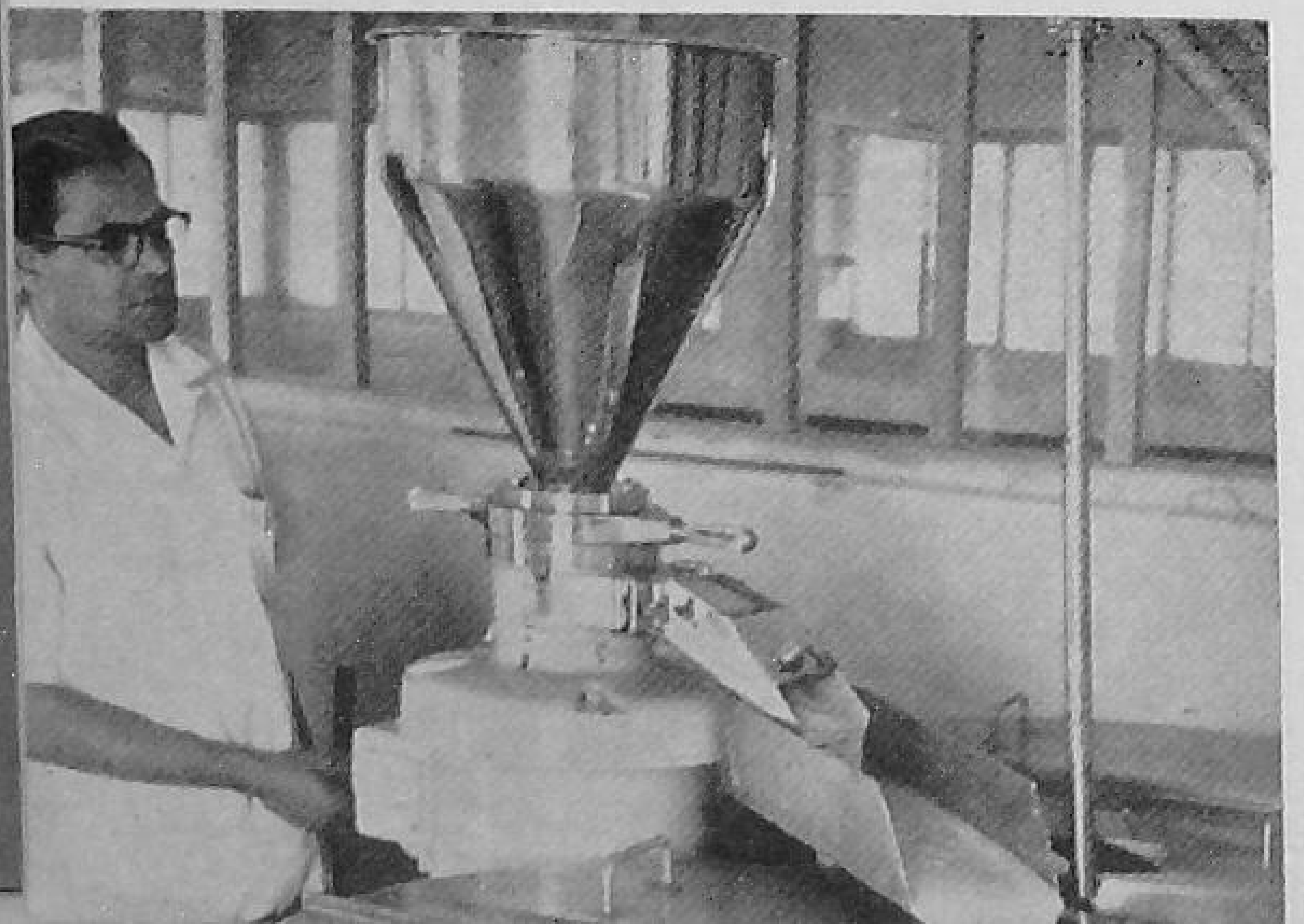


Strings of banana bunches spread out to let them ripen before they are carried to the Plant.

Ripe bananas being cut down to small pieces.

BANANA POWDER FACTORY

The banana is thoroughly crushed into a slurry before it is dried up to form powder.



A view of the buildings for the Plant.

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LETTERS

Sir,

IN WEST BENGAL, village chowkidars and Daffadars are eligible for contesting elections to Village Panchayats. Experience has shown that these village officials due to their association with the Police, wield considerable influence amongst the villagers, particularly the simple, illiterate Adivasis in tribal blocks. They manage to get elected even though the people do not like them at heart. This is just defeating the very purpose of free and fair elections to the Panchayats. Really capable and honest persons whom the villagers would like to take charge of in the Village Panchayat are by-passed. Even the secret ballot is no answer to the problem because the ignorant and the illiterate tribal people are under such awe of these village officials that they fail to exercise their right of voting with proper discrimination. It is, therefore, suggested that rules pertaining to Panchayat elections should be modified so as to debar these village officials from contesting the elections.

Yours etc.,
Bibhuti Bhushan Jana

27-1-64
Midnapore
WEST BENGAL.

* * *

PANCHAYATS AND CO-OPERATIVES

Sir,

ALTHOUGH Panchayats and Co-operatives are usually under the same Ministry at the Centre as well as the States, there is no proper co-ordination between the two. And this is reflected in the functioning of the Panchayats and Co-operatives at the village level also. To say that the Sahkari Samaj provides the economic content to political democracy which Panchayati Raj is, remains a mere theory. No serious and organised efforts have ever been made to bring the two organisations closer to each other at the ground level to promote better results. Experience has shown that wherever the Sarpanch also happened to be the Chairman or Secretary of the Service Co-operative, satisfactory results were achieved. It is now admitted on all hands that unless they act in unision with each other, the preparation of the village production plan and the increase in farm output in terms of that Plan cannot be easily achieved. The Chairman of the Service Co-operative should be ex-officio member of the village Panchayat. Similarly, the Sarpanch of the Village Panchayat should be ex-officio member of the Managing Committee of the Service Co-operative. This organisational link-up between the two basic village institutions will help both the organisations to play their role fully and effectively. The Panchayat will use its influence to strengthen the Service Co-operative so that it can fully meet the requirements of loans, fertilisers, improved seeds and insecticides as envisaged in the Village Production Plan.

Suitable steps should also be taken to reorientate the Chairmen of the Village Panchayats and Service Co-operatives in the programmes and policies of each other's organisation with a view to promote better understanding between them. The Panchayati Raj Training Centres and the Co-operative Training Institutions should revise their syllabus accordingly.

Yours etc.,
Ram Chand

13-2-64
Mehrauli
DELHI.

BANANA EARNS FOREIGN EXCHANGE

A banana plantation in Jalgaon District

MY VISIT last month to Jalgaon in Maharashtra indicated clearly how our poor and illiterate cultivators may start earning thousands of rupees for themselves and save valuable foreign exchange worth millions of rupees provided they are shown the right way to do a thing. They are skilled, hard-working and resourceful. They only need a little guidance to the horizon beyond. The guidance and facilities offered under the Community Development Programme have helped them to bring about startling improvement in their earning capacity.

Jalgaon is not the top district to produce bananas; it is Raver and Yawal Talukas which are the main producers of bananas in Maharashtra. But a chance look at a roadside banana cultivation in Jalgaon made me ask Shri K. M. Patil, Vice-President, Zila Parishad, Jalgaon the question: "Where do you sell the fruit?" Pat came the reply, "To Bombay, Delhi and as far as Kuwait, Italy and Russia." I was somewhat taken aback by this unusual reply. Shri Patil who is also the Chairman, Fruit Sale Co-operative Federation, gave me further details of banana cultivation in the district. "An acre of banana crop yields on an average an income of Rs. 3,000", he said. This highly lucrative aspect has led the banana growers to increase their cultivation to about 25,000 acres in the district which until a few years ago was not even 50% of its present coverage. With the advent of the C.D. programme in the district and the provision of loan facilities for pumping sets, irrigation wells and fertilisers, the banana cultivation has received a great boost. At present about 10,000 wagon loads of the fruit leave Jalgaon every year.

BANANA EXPORT

With a view to protect and promote the interests of the banana growers, a number of Fruit Sale Co-operative Societies have been formed in various villages. Last year a Federation of these Fruit Sale Societies was also set up. The export trade in bananas is of recent origin. Previously, the S. Vallabhai Patel Fruit Society, Bardoli in Gujarat used to export bananas to Kuwait for which purpose it had even purchased a ship. Soon some Co-operative Societies in Maharashtra also entered the field and began to export the fruit to Kuwait. Sensing the danger involved in cut-throat competition in the foreign market, the Maharashtra State Co-operative Marketing Society took the initiative and brought about an amicable agreement between the Co-operative Societies of Maharashtra and those in Gujarat by fixing their quota at 40 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. It is for the District Federations to allocate the further distribution of export quotas between various primary Fruit Sale Societies. The District Federation Jalgaon collects a nominal charge of Rs. 1.50 per 1,000 bunches of bananas for the service it renders and has an annual income of about Rs. 10,000. The State Marketing Society charges 4 per cent commission on the export of bananas. In 1961-62, 1,860 tons of bananas were exported to foreign countries, mainly to Kuwait. In

1962-63, 3,600 tons of bananas worth over Rupees two millions was exported,—this time to Russia and Italy as well. It is understood that this year, there is some demand from France also.

PROBLEMS

Banana which is poor man's fruit in our country is considered a luxury in Western countries. "A single banana which costs hardly 5 Naye Paise here may cost as much as 50 Naye Paise or even more in Russia," said Shri Patil. "An extremely paying business indeed," I exclaimed. To this Shri Patil replied that it was not so simple as that. He pointed out the various risks involved. The fruit being a highly perishable commodity, about 25 per cent of it is lost in transhipment. "It was high time", he added, "that the Government did something about providing refrigeration facilities in railway wagons and ships meant for carrying the fruit." Another problem to which Shri Patil alluded was the extremely keen competition from other foreign countries, particularly the African countries to capture the market for bananas. He referred to the heavy losses suffered by the banana growers last year because in Italy no porters were forthcoming for six days to unload the ship.

Shri Patil pointed out a number of other problems faced by the banana growers and pleaded for their early removal in order to promote banana cultivation on a large scale. He listed lack of communication facilities as the main problem. During the monsoons, the rich harvest rotted in the cultivator's house for lack of suitable transport facilities. He also complained that the railway freight charges were far too excessive. Although as a result of their representations, the wagon freight up to Delhi had been reduced by Rs. 250, yet it was still far too high and further cut was urgently called for. He also pointed out that in view of the fact that 10,000 wagons of banana moved out of Jalgaon every year and the Railways earned about Rs. 2 crores annually by way of freight, there should be provision of better facilities particularly of cold storage for the preservation of the fruits. In order to promote export trade there was greater need for publicity in foreign countries. He explained that although in India, the spotted banana was considered to be the best yet in foreign countries it was considered inferior to the one having pure yellow skin. This misunderstanding in the foreigner's minds needed to be removed for it affected the sale of the fruits a large quantity of which did develop spots with the passage of time. He was also of the opinion that there was great scope for cultivation of banana on more scientific lines and the farmer would be greatly benefited if the agricultural experts and the extension staff concentrated their efforts on studying the agro-climatic effects on banana cultivation.

BANANA POWDER PLANT

With the setting up of a Banana Powder Plant at Jalgaon which is nearing completion, the solution of one of their biggest problems viz; highly perishable nature of the fruits seems to be well within their grasp. The construction of this plant which is the first of its kind in India, has been largely possible because of the pioneering efforts made by Shri D. N. Nikam, M.L.A., and the Chairman of the District Marketing Society, Jalgaon. He informed me how the idea of setting up such a plant struck him in 1957 when there was a glut in the market and the fruit produce was perishing at the houses of the banana growers. The District Marketing Society called a meeting of the banana growers to find out a solution of their problems. As a result of their representations, the Railway authorities agreed to reduce the railway freight. This provided some relief to the hard pressed cultivators. But Shri Nikam, not being satisfied with this continued to think in terms of a more lasting solution. And the result was the Banana Powder Plant.

The Plant has been built by a Danish firm at a cost of Rs. 5 lakhs. Buildings have cost another five lakhs. The latest and most hygienic methods are being adopted for preparing the banana powder. When I reached the site, there was jubilation alround at the first successful trial. The Plant has a capacity of 1,000 lbs. per shift. It is capable of utilising the fruit produce of 200 acres throughout the year.

The Banana Powder costing about Rs. 3 per lb. is a highly nutrient baby food and it can be used in the preparation of biscuits, pastry, ice-cream, pudding etc. There is a great demand for banana powder in foreign countries. Like the banana fruit itself, this may well become a great foreign-exchange earner. The Plant can also be used for making powder of other perishable fruits like Mango, Papiya etc.

India's best Village of the Year

FATEHPUR VILLAGE of Kota district in Rajasthan was selected as the country's best village at the National level Prize Competition for 1962-63. The article reproduced here is a free rendering from its original in Hindi appearing in the Rajasthan Vikas, a monthly journal of the Rajasthan State Government—Editor.

NEITHER the land in Baran Panchayat Samiti is barren nor Fatehpur is a deserted place like Fetehpur Sikri. It is a small blooming village about 6 miles from Baran (Panchayat Samiti Headquarters) in Kota District of Rajasthan which has earned the distinction of being the best village in the National level prize competition for 1962-63.

The reasons for the outstanding success achieved by this village are not far to seek. All its 175 cultivator families use different kinds of manure and fertilizers and improved methods of agriculture. The whole cultivated area, 2,032 acres, has been saturated with improved seeds of C 591 and Basmati rice. All the agricultural families are under co-operative fold and are active members of the village service co-operative. The village is not only self-sufficient in its requirements of improved seeds but it supplies them to other neighbouring villages and Panchayat Samities. About 6,000 mds. of wheat seed were supplied to the adjoining villages during 1962-63.

THREE BASIC INSTITUTIONS

All the three basic institutions for the development and welfare of a village,—the village panchayat, Service Co-operative and the School —are functioning in perfect harmony with each other. The Sarpanch and members of the Panchayat, though not elected unanimously, are enjoying full confidence of the Gram Sabha. The Sarpanch, a progressive farmer, not only puts his head and heart in the development activities of the village but serves as a source of inspiration to other villagers also. The Panchayat has had a creditable record inasmuch as all the decisions have been taken unanimously.

The village service co-operative which was started as far back as 1960 with only 30 members and a share capital of Rs. 1,110, today has on its roll 175 members with a share capital of Rs. 3,185.

AGRICULTURE

The Navyuvak Mandal or the Youth Club is playing a predominant part in the development of the village. All the 42 members of the Mandal have taken up various agricultural projects such as the use of different kinds of fertilizers in various proportions, and different kinds of seeds in varying conditions. The Chairman of the Mandal has been on a Bharat Darshan tour organised by the State Government and he has seen for himself the big changes going on in different parts of the country. He has returned with new ideas and schemes and is experimenting with some of these in his own fields. Today every field in the village is a laboratory where experiments on various items of agriculture are going on and every cultivator is thoroughly engaged in the task of increasing the yield per acre.

Till about a quarter of a century ago, the cultivation of paddy was unknown in the village but today the farmers are harvesting 50 maunds of paddy per acre. The Japanese method of paddy cultivation has been adopted on a wide scale as a result of the efforts made by the extension agency of the Community Development Department. Though paddy cultivation covers an area of 508 acres only the income of the village has been raised by Rs. 1½ lakhs. Villagers are now free from their age-old debts and are progressively raising their standard of living.

One of the most striking features which attracts the attention of the visitor is the cleanliness of the village. Every house, (there is scarcely a pacca house in the village) is mud-plastered, white-washed and decorated with Alpanas. Houses of the members of the Navyuvak Mandal are fitted with name plates bearing membership numbers. Ventilation, proper sanitation and Parindas (places for keeping drinking water) are common features of all the houses throughout the village.

(*Continued on page 16*)

Murlikheda Joint Farming Society

TAKES ITS FIRST CROP

HOW SMALL land-holders by pooling their land and resources under a co-operative farming society can reap rich dividends from their joint venture has been manifested by the Murlikheda Joint Farming Co-operative Society in the Sanchi Development Block in Madhya Pradesh. This society, with 17 members and a total land area of 230 acres, was formed in 1961. It has a share capital of Rs. 4,000 of which Rs. 2,000 have been contributed by the members of the society and shares of equal amount have been taken by the Government. The pooled 230 acres of land belonging to members consists of 10 to 16 acres from each member.

LAND RECLAIMED

This 230 acres of land, which was almost fallow, was purchased by the members some 7 or 8 years ago prior to the registration of the society. The members tried their level best to bring the land under cultivation but despite their hard labour, they could not bring more than 40 acres of land under cultivation. As it was not possible for the persons to get their respective land reclaimed individually, they decided to form a Joint Farming Co-operative Society. After the registration of the society, the reclamation of land was taken in hand during the month of February 1962 with the help of the tractors of the Bhopal Tractor Organisation and completed by the middle of March 1962.

The situation of land is very favourable so far as irrigation facilities are concerned. The society got a loan of Rs. 25,000 from the Government under the Lift Irrigation Scheme and installed two pumping sets at the Ghodapachhad river which provided irrigation to about 50 acres. The society will undertake contour-bunding in the whole area after the Rabi crop is harvested.

CULTIVATION IN FIRST YEAR

During the first year of its operation in the Kharif and Rabi seasons of 1962-63, expenses amounted to Rs. 9,780 which included cost of seeds, fertilizers, sowing, harvesting etc. Its income was to the tune of Rs. 10,157.

Members of the Murlikheda Joint Farming Society taking stock of their progress and discussing their programme for the day.

This was the first sowing of the society and on account of unlevelled fields, sowing operations could not be done properly.

Now the society has purchased one tractor and it is expected that it will be able to level all the fields in the current Rabi season. One of the members of the society has also undergone 6 months' training at the Tractor Training Centre at Budhni. The income of the society, after the end of the Rabi season will be 4 to 5 times more than the previous season's income. It is expected that the income of the society during 1963-64 would be about Rs. 24,000.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Government assistance includes Rs. 2,000 in the form of share capital, Rs. 4,000 medium-term loan, Rs. 3,750 godown loan, Rs. 1,250 godown subsidy, Rs. 820 managerial subsidy and Rs. 25,000 lift-irrigation loan. Besides this, the Co-operative Bank provided Rs. 5,000 as short-term loan and Rs. 37,790 as medium-term loan. The society has repaid short-term loan and an instalment of medium-term loan to the Co-operative Bank. The society has also

(*Continued on page 7*)

F.A.O. Delegates Visit

A RADIO RURAL FORUM

ANAND SHANKAR SHARMA

THE FARMERS of Ghitorni village, situated near the historic Qutab Minar of Delhi, had the unique privilege of receiving thirty-four FAO Delegates from 15 foreign countries recently. The village wore a new look. The entire village population—men, women and children had donned their colourful costumes and come out on the outskirts of the village to accord a warm welcome to the foreign dignitaries.

The distinguished delegates had come to the Capital of India to attend a Seminar organised by the FAO. They came from the United States, England, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Nepal, Ceylon, Cambodia, K.M.T. China, Malaya, Laos, Japan, Phillipines, Vietnam and Korea.

The sounding of the big drums announced the arrival of the delegates. They were cordially received by the President of the Village Panchayat with folded hands in the traditional Indian style and were profusely garlanded. Thereafter, they were taken in a procession with the beating of drums and blowing of conch shells. It appeared as if the village youth had caught the spirit of holi festival. They danced with joy while village belles sang. And lo! the foreign delegates, also joined to the pleasant surprise of the village folk; and their footsteps soon tripped to the rhythmic tune of the drums and the belles. The village elders did not lag behind. They also followed it. The foreigners had captivated the hearts of the youth and the old alike. The tempo of the beating of the drum increased and the movements of the hands and feet of the belles became fast. The distance between the East and the West was felt no more. The distance of one furlong was soon covered and the party reached the Village Community Centre.

AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Chairman of the Radio Rural Forum received the distinguished party at the gate, which was tastefully decorated with banana and mango leaves. The central hall was shining with gas lights and coloured buntings. The members with their badges on their breasts, stood to welcome the delegates. Every member was introduced to the leader of the delegation Mr. John Noble, hailing from Australia.

F.A.O. delegates amongst the Delhi farmers discussing the programme at the Radio Rural Forum.

FORUM PROGRAMME

The delegates had come to see the functioning of the Radio Rural Forum. At 7 p.m. the rural broadcast began for the forum members; and at once the sweet noise turned into hushed silence. The questions put up by the members last week, were answered and a programme on summer vegetables relayed. Thereafter, a discussion began among the forum members. It was a rocky area and water in the wells was very deep,—as low as 70 feet below the surface. The farmers were, therefore, advised in the previous programmes to take up other subsidiary occupations *e.g.* dairy farming and poultry farming to help increase their income. They were also advised to take to vegetable cultivation where adequate irrigation water was available. These problems and the programmes broadcast were explained to the foreign delegates.

Everyone present was agreeably surprised to learn from the delegates that the rural broadcasting in their countries except certain advanced countries was almost identical with, of course, some variations depending on the geography and development of a particular country.

Mr. Nobuo Kammido, a rural programme broadcaster from Tokyo said that about 99 per cent of the farmer population in Japan had their own radio sets. They listened to the rural programmes not in the manner as the Indian farmers did at the Community Centre but in their own apartments. He, however, agreed that the programmes to educate the farmers broadcast from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation were almost similar to that of the All India Radio.

Mr. Bert Gemora, a rural programme broadcaster from Philippines said that they had almost the same problems and the same conditions about the farmer community as he had seen in India. Philippines, he informed, had Barrio Councils on the pattern of Village Panchayats in India. The farmers in his country assembled in the council halls to listen to the National Services programmes on agriculture and development. In the remote villages, however, the old systems still prevailed. There the drum beaters announced to the people Government's important decisions on agriculture and allied subjects.

Mr. John Noble from Australia said that about 50 per cent of the farmers in his country had their own television sets. The rural programmes had proved more efficacious in his country with a weekly television broadcast, he added.

The F.A.O. delegates, who had a glimpse of rural India for the first time, were visibly moved by the welcome and hospitality accorded to them by the farmers of Ghitorni.

Mr. Noble, in his concluding speech warmly thanked the villagers for their wonderful welcome. He was very happy to say that although the villagers in India were still striving to come out of the veil of backwardness, they had kept up their age-old traditions of 'large heartedness' and hospitality, which they would never forget.

MURLIKHEDA JOINT FARMING SOCIETY

(*Continued from page 5*)

repaid the godown loan instalment to the Government.

The Chairman and the Manager of the Society allot work to the members daily. A Daily work register is maintained by the Manager of the Society for both the members and non-members. Rates for different types of works are fixed by the General Body according to local prevailing rates.

SUBSIDIARY OCCUPATION

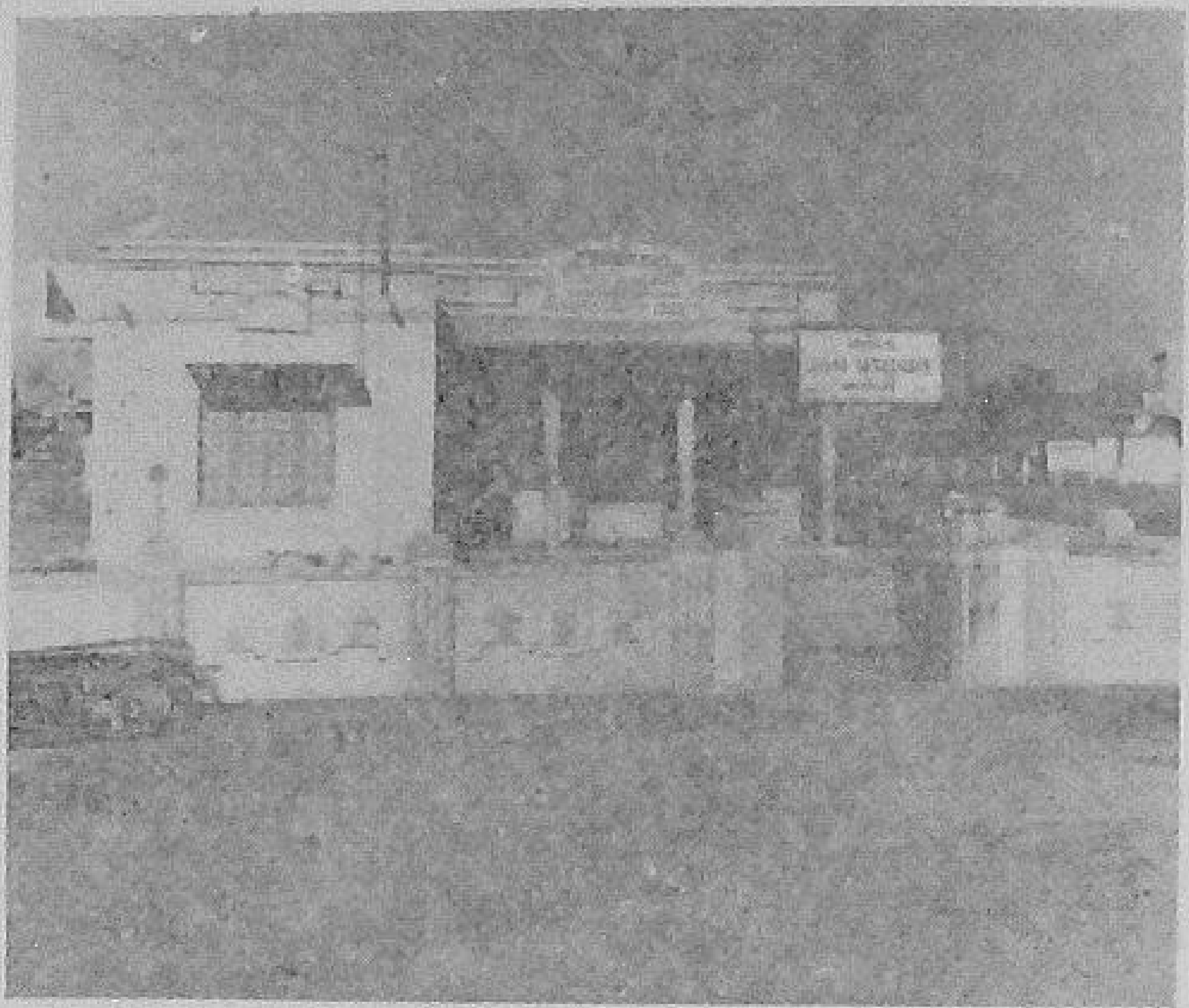
Society will take up dairy farming from next year. This occupation will give an additional income to the society and employment to its six to seven members. Some of the members of the society know the art of brick making. The society has applied to the Khadi and Village Industries Board, Ujjain for loan to start this work. The society has started the work in anticipation of sanction of loan. The clay of this tract is suitable for brick making. This occupation will provide employment to 4 to 5 members of the society during non-agricultural season. The society has purchased one cane-crusher for preparing gur out of sugarcane. The work of installing the cane-crusher is in progress.

CORRIGENDUM

The words "Andhra Pradesh" in the caption of the photograph appearing on the back page of January issue of Panchayati Raj may be read as "Madras" since Kottur Panchayat Union lies in the latter State. The mistake is deeply regretted —Editor.

A VILLAGE OF OUR DREAMS

TALOD VILLAGE having a population of 7,000 in Sabarkantha District of Gujarat typifies what a prosperous and progressive village would look like in India of tomorrow. It is a village of our dreams. It surpasses even some of our modern cities in so far as the provision of civic amenities is concerned. It has wide tarred roads with street electrification, its own water works with piped water supply to each house, complete educational facilities from a Nursery to a High School and an Arts and Science College with Hostels; a modern and well-equipped Hospital with X-Ray arrangements looked after by qualified Male and Lady doctors and an open air theatre for recreation.



Gram Panchayat Office, Talod

AN ACTIVE PANCHAYAT

Yet, it is a *village* and not a *city*! It has its own Village Panchayat and a Service Co-operative. The Panchayat has an annual income of Rs. 58,000. Its main sources of income are from House Tax (about Rs. 13,000) and Water charges (about Rs. 12,000), Shop Tax, Entertainment Tax and land revenue etc. making up the rest of the income. The office of the Panchayat is located in its own building constructed at a cost of Rs. 12,000. It is fully equipped with furniture and a telephone. With 50 per cent matching grant received from the Government, the Panchayat has spent over Rs. 2 lakhs on Water Supply Scheme, Rs. 1.5 lakhs on drainage, Rs. 32,000 on roads, Rs. 20,000 on Primary School building, Rs. 5,000 on Nursery School Building, Rs. 4,000 on Ladies' Club Building, Rs. 15,000 on open air theatre, and Rs. 25,000 on staff quarters.

The Panchayat has been devoting great attention towards developing agriculture. It has taken steps to arrange distribution of improved seeds and fertilisers through the Service Co-operative. Soil conservation measures have been adopted over an area of 200 acres. More than one hundred wells have been sunk to provide irrigation for the dry lands. This region is known for its black cotton soil. The village stood first in the district in producing the long staple cotton.

AN IDEAL SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE

It has an ideal Service Co-operative. With a membership of 270, it has a subscribed share capital of Rs. 12,000. It has taken a loan of Rs. 1,25,000 from the Co-operative Bank. Its credit worthiness is apparent from the fact that it has attracted fixed deposits of about Rs. 2 lakhs. Its effectiveness in supplying essential consumer goods like cloth, sugar, kerosene oil, cement etc. and agricultural commodities like improved seeds, and fertilisers, insecticides etc. may be gauged from the fact that its monthly turn-over is about Rs. one lakh. It has six regular employees. Its net income is over Rs. 1,000 per month. It distributed a dividend of Rs. 33,000 last year. The Society has Reserve Funds of Rs. 50,000 and assets of over Rs. 3 lakhs. It is introducing a system of distributing taccavi to the cultivators and receiving it back in kind and has opened Pass Books for individual members.

Besides the Service Co-operative, there is a Primary Marketing Society which regulates the sale of agricultural commodities brought by the

farmers to the Mandi. It has an yearly income of Rs. 40,000 and an expenditure of Rs. 20,000. It offers to the cultivators facility of storage of foodgrains in its godowns held by the Ware Housing Corporation.

A DEDICATED FAMILY

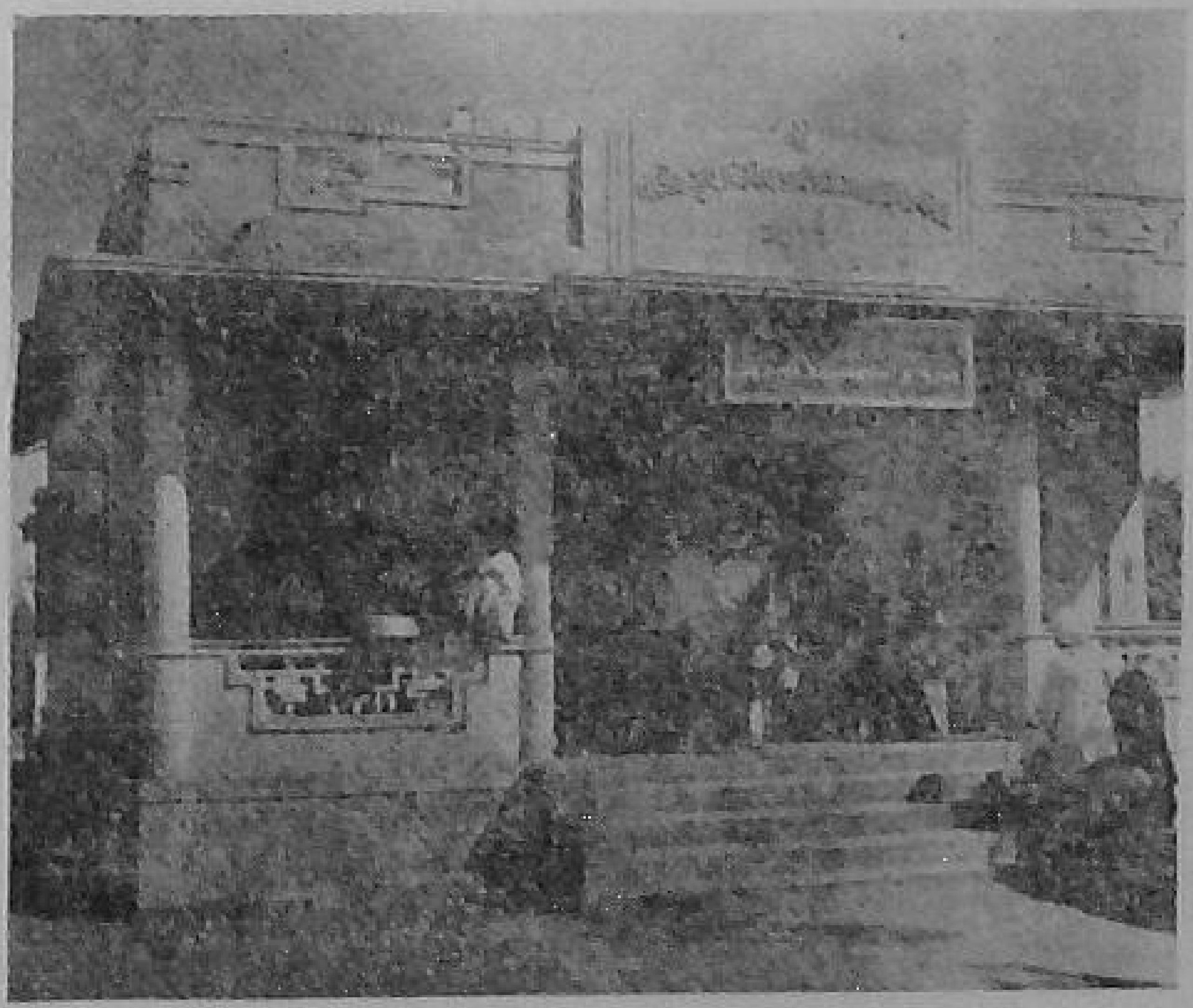
One wonders how this village has achieved such remarkable progress. And the surprise is all the greater when one comes to know that barely three decades ago, the place was a vast expanse of waste land and jungles without any human habitation. Its story of colonisation and the advancement of human civilisation began with the arrival of Shri Chunnibhai Patel who put up a small hut here. This grand old man of eighty is still alive. It is mainly through the pioneering efforts and selfless services rendered by him and his family that this village has reached its present stature of development. His son Shri Santu Bhai is Sarpanch of the Village Panchayat. On the insistence of the people he has not given up his duties as a Sarpanch even after his election as an M.L.A. Shri Ambu Bhai, brother of Shri Chunnibhai has been a lifelong Co-operator and it is through his efforts that the Service Cc-operative Society and the Marketing Society have been largely developed.

Shri Santubhai Patel

MODEL VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

These three members of the same family have, through their personal examples of selfless service, created a very favourable atmosphere for social service work. They have attracted around them a number of other devoted and sincere workers so that the pace of development work has been truly remarkable. They have set in motion a fine tradition of Voluntary contributions and Charity Trusts for looking after a number of public institutions. Through public donations they have built a High School building at a cost of about Rs. 2 lakhs. A Public Educational Society is looking after its day to day expenses. An Arts and Science College with a Hostel has been built at a cost of Rs. 8 lakhs, the entire money being raised through public contributions. A Voluntary body named Sabarkantha Mahavidyalaya Mandal looks after its management and current expenditure. The building for the Hospital with 20 beds and a maternity Ward has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 1,50,000—the entire money being raised through public donations. Its running expenses of about Rs. 35,000 per month are met by regular contributions from the people. The medical officer in-charge of the Hospital,—a young Medical graduate told me that he is so satisfied with his present emoluments and conditions of service that he would not like to go in even for Government Service which is known for its security and favourable terms. This is indeed a far cry from the pathetic situation prevailing in some of the places where adequate staff is not available to man the Government dispensaries. The running of public institutions with the help of large sums of money obtained through public munificence is a healthy tradition. It is an index of the people's capacity to manage their affairs. By looking after their own institutions they have relieved the Government of its responsibility to that extent. This is what the Community Development and Panchayati Raj seek to do. The residents of village Talod and their leaders deserve to be congratulated for having built up on a voluntary basis model institutions and for having demonstrated to their fellow countrymen the ideal way to run them efficiently and successfully.

Service Co-operative Society, Talod



Inter-University

DEBATE ON PANCHAYATI RAJ

(*By Our Correspondent*)

THE VIVEKANAND Hall of the Delhi University was the venue of the Third All India Inter-University debate on Panchayati Raj held on 24th February, 1964. Eleven universities represented by a team of two students, one for and the other against the motion, adjudged the best at a prior selection held by the respective University, participated in the debate. The universities that took part in the competition were : Viswa Bharati, Osmania, Patna, Agra, Kerala, Delhi, Bombay, Jadavpur, Rajasthan, Aligarh and Utkal.

The national competition jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation and the Planning Forum of the Delhi University was presided over by Dr. B. N. Ganguli, Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University. The subject of the debate was : "Panchayati Raj institutions provide the essential base for democracy and for mobilising the people for economic development." The standard of debate was fairly high and the participants displayed considerable skill and knowledge on the subject. It was a girl student, Miss Anuradha Mozumdar from Patna University who won the first prize of Rs. 250. She spoke in favour of the motion. The second prize of Rs. 200 went to Shri J. Moos of Bombay University who also spoke in favour of the motion. The third prize of Rs. 150 was won by Shri Kshitij Mohan of Patna University who spoke against the motion. The team from Patna University was adjudged the best.

FOR

The arguments put forward by the speakers in favour of the motion may be summarised as follows :

(1) Panchayati Raj institutions are not the *only* but *essential* base for democracy and for mobilising the people for economic development.

(2) The success of democracy depends on the right type of leadership. These institutions provide the best practical training school in leadership to a large number of people.

(3) The best form of democracy is direct participation by the people in their self-governing process. The Greek City States of yore typified this form of the true democracy. But with millions of people inhabiting a country, it is practical to set up only a representative Government at the Centre. To offset its defects there must be smaller units of self-government in which as large a number of people can participate as possible. This is sought to be achieved by the Panchayati Raj institutions.

(4) There were democratic institutions at the Central and State levels but not below. But the Panchayati Raj institutions seek to fulfil these essential gaps at the base.

(5) Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Therefore, Panchayati Raj which is decentralisation of power, is a step in the right direction.

(6) Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. Panchayati Raj institutions provide to the people a better opportunity for closer supervision over the public affairs. The official and non-official functionaries of these bodies are in the constant gaze of the people and therefore, they are less liable to misbehave.

(7) Panchayati Raj is the logical extension up to the bottom of the democratic principle as practised at the top. If democracy is good at the top, why is it not so at the ground level?

(8) Panchayati Raj seeks to remove the defects of red-tapism, inefficiency and indifference inherent in a centralised system of bureaucratic administration.

(9) The villagers though uneducated, are the best judges of their felt-needs. Therefore, plans made by them are more realistic than the ones prepared by white-collared babus and officers in remote offices.

(10) The most interested party in any development scheme is the beneficiary *i.e.* the villagers. Therefore, if the plans are entrusted to their representatives for implementation, they

will be most interested in accomplishing these by mobilising all their resources in men and money.

(11) Agricultural production constitutes the base of our national economy. Food is produced by the farmers in the fields. Panchayati Raj bodies located nearest the fields seek to enlist the co-operation of the village cultivators to produce more by evolving their own village production plans and by producing their own requirements of seeds, fertilisers, insecticides, etc.

(12) Huge centralised projects are not enough for the economic development of the country. Small and cottage industries have an important role to play in the industrial development of the country. Panchayati Raj bodies provide the apparatus for organising these small industries.

AGAINST

The speakers on the opposite side, by and large, did not find fault with the concept and philosophy of Panchayati Raj but they based their arguments on practical considerations. Some of the important points made by them are listed as follows :

(1) Panchayati Raj is the decentralisation of power and along with it corruption, bribery and nepotism.

(2) Panchayati Raj has failed because it has led to the establishment of 'Pradhan Raj',—a new social order in which the old, feudal and caste-ridden upper caste people have come to wield sway. The weaker sections are still being exploited.

(3) Panchayati Raj institutions do extend facilities of seeds, fertilisers, and loans etc. But for whom? These are all meant for the upper caste people and not for the weaker sections who are really in need of such facilities.

(4) The villagers, being illiterate are unable to discharge their responsibilities properly.

(5) Panchayati Raj institutions do not promote stability. They lead to feuds and factionalism as a result of which murders are committed. It is only centralisation that can achieve order and stability.

(6) Panchayati Raj might be a success in the past. But it is not bound to be so under the changed conditions in modern India.

(7) Panchayati Raj has not been an essential prerequisite for success of democracy in Western countries like England and America; why should it be essential for the success of democracy in India ?

(8) The Panchayats modelled on the Parliamentary system of elections followed in England may not take roots in Indian soil which has a different socio-economic background based on caste and religion.

(9) Panchayati Raj bodies have executive functions to perform unaided by any corresponding legislative apparatus. This is like having a body without any head.

(10) Panchayati Raj institutions either pave way for oligarchy or anarchy but certainly not for democracy.

(11) Panchayati Raj has taught only how to get more money from the Government. It has not encouraged voluntary involvement of the people in the development plans. As such, it has proved a very expensive experiment.

(12) Modern age is the age of industrialisation. Panchayati Raj and big industries go ill together.

(13) Our economic policy is a mixed or open one, whereas under the Panchayati Raj set-up village economy is based on self-sufficiency which is a closed one and does not fit in with the modern trend.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLE

Dr. Ganguli, in his presidential remarks sought to analyse the fundamentals of democracy. According to him, democracy is an ideal which is to be realised by stages. There are several countries, which are considered to be the 'home' of democracy but it has not been fully realised there as yet.

True democracy, according to him, must be direct democracy as existed in the Greek City States of yore. But in large countries having a population of tens of millions of people, it is simply not possible to have such a direct democracy. Hence arises the need for a representative system of Government. In order to bridge the gap between the representative democracy and direct democracy various devices have been evolved to ensure active participation of the people at various levels. In Western countries, there are a number of voluntary organisations based on social, religious and other functional

(*Continued on page 15*)

State Directors of Information Meet

(By Our Correspondent)

VIGYAN BHAVAN was the venue of a three-day Conference of the State Directors of Information. The Conference, while discussing the problems of organisation, finance and techniques of various publicity media in a general way, devoted special attention to the needs of the Community Development Programme, Sahakari Samaj and Panchayati Raj.

DEY'S SPEECH

After the inauguration of the Conference by Shri Satya Narain Sinha, Shri S. K. Dey, Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, in his 45-minute speech emphasised the vital need of the hour to educate the mass mind of the rural India. He said that with the spread of Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj, democracy had assumed a much broader and deeper significance. Outside the Western world, India was the only hope of democracy and, therefore, whatever happened to Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj was of vital importance not only to our country but to the whole world. He further pointed out that the success of democratic movement depended on how over 5 millions of duly elected village leaders involved in the Panchayati Raj and Co-operatives behaved. Though they were illiterate, their hearts and minds were sound, he argued. But they did stand in need of proper training in democracy and leadership.

Continuing his speech, Shri Dey remarked that if he understood the present mood of the rural people correctly, he could say with confidence that they were fed up with mere information regarding the schemes and intentions of the Government. What they now needed were positive results, he added. Therefore, it was high time that our publicity was geared to specific achievements in any field of activity. They benefited much more when they realised that people like them whether in their immediate neighbourhood or at remote places had achieved outstanding results. This stirred up their emotions and imagination and challenged them to emulate their splendid example. Concluding, he briefly indicated how the various publicity media could be effectively utilised for projecting concrete achievements.

BASIC ISSUES

The State Directors of Information had a free and frank discussion of the various issues involved in reorienting the publicity apparatus to the needs of the rural India. There was a fairly large agreement over the following basic issues viz;

(a) That in order to create maximum impact on the minds of the rural people, the various publicity media should aim at specific achievements in any development field. When the rural people see, hear or read about the achievements of someone from amongst them whom they know intimately, they are influenced far more than otherwise. Even in remote places, the account of real men and women sets up a healthy emulative process.

(b) The literature so far as possible should be produced in the regional language of the people whom it is meant to serve.

(c) Efforts should be made to draw out the local talents in the fields of song, dance and drama and to project development themes through them. Even the writing of the script for the drama should be done by the local artist, no matter even though he might be illiterate.

SOME DOUBTS

Some doubts were however expressed about the possibility of identifying and reporting the success stories to the fullest possible extent. It was pointed out that barring a few exceptions here and there a majority of the development functionaries did not care to report about the successful happenings in their parts of the areas. Other delegates felt that the existing publicity organisation in the States was inadequate and that it should be supplemented out of extra grants to be provided either by the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation or the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the purpose. Some others went so far as to suggest that the post of the S.E.O. which had been abolished should be revived.

(Continued on page 16)

Prize Incentives for Co-operatives

THE UNION MINISTRY of Community Development and Co-operation has drawn up a scheme for the award of prizes and incentives to the best co-operative institutions as well as individuals who have done work in furtherance of the co-operative movement.

INSTITUTIONAL INCENTIVES

Under the scheme, the best model society in every district which has a consistently good record of performance over a number of years, might be selected by the District Co-operative Banks or the District Co-operative Unions for award of rolling shields or trophies every year. Small cash prizes may also be awarded to a few societies which have been functioning on sound lines or have shown outstanding results. The central banks would be interested in creating a spirit of healthy competition among its affiliated societies to encourage them for successful and efficient functioning.

The central scheme points out that the State Co-operative Unions may institute prize competition schemes on the basis of the performance of a particular type of co-operative institution such as service co-operatives, marketing co-operatives, consumers' co-operatives, co-operative farming societies, urban credit societies, salary earners' societies, etc. These competitions should be held on the State level. The performance of a co-operative may have to be viewed from various angles, namely, the criteria for selection of a good service co-operative in such prize competition scheme may be the coverage of population, increase in share capital and deposits, service and supply functions, linking of credit with marketing, assistance rendered in drawing up village production plan and individual production plans, volume of credit advanced particularly to the weaker sections of the community, financial stability, sound management, members' participation, maintenance of accounts, etc. Similarly, in the case of marketing and processing societies, the criteria may include, among others, the extent of operations in regard to the marketing and processing of agricultural produce, extent of grading of commodities handled by them, improvement in business practices adopted by the societies, extent of outright purchases made by them, etc. Similarly, suitable criteria may have to be adopted in judging the performance of other co-operative institutions and in selecting the best societies. In the initial stages, the State Co-operative Unions may have to obtain the necessary funds for giving such prizes from the State Governments. If such competitions are held in a large number of States, the National Co-operative Union of India might consider the question of instituting similar prize competition schemes at the national level.

INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVES

On the basis of the performance of key individuals *vis-a-vis* co-operatives, the best non-official co-operators and office-bearers of the co-operative institutions in various fields of activities can be selected. The scheme envisages that incentives may be provided to them in the form of inter-State/intra-State study tours.

Selected office-bearers of co-operative societies may be granted sanads or certificates for the good work they have done in relation to their co-operative society or the co-operative movement in the district. They may be honoured, in public on important occasions like the All India Co-operative Week.

Selected office-bearers of primary co-operatives should be afforded an opportunity for institutional training at the junior training schools to make them better equipped to discharge their duties and to be the leaders of the co-operative movement.

FROM THE CENTRE

ELECTIONS TO PANCHAYATI RAJ BODIES

THE GOVERNMENT of India have set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri K. Santhanam to study the methods of elections to Panchayati Raj bodies in the various States, with special reference to the methods which have been conducive to the growth of Panchayati Raj.

The Committee has therefore been asked to study various aspects of the problem and make recommendations on the strength and composition of Panchayati Raj bodies at the village, block and district levels as well as the method of elections that can ensure their efficient functioning and the evolution of harmonious and co-ordinated pattern of representative institutions in the country. It has been asked to examine how far uniformity in Panchayat elections is practicable, consistent with the growth of democratic processes and to what extent political parties should take part in the elections. It will recommend measures to ensure free and fair elections and consider the desirability of setting up a State-level commission for the purpose.

The Committee will also suggest measures to ensure adequate and effective representation of the weaker sections of the community, the method or election of office-bearers, and the terms of membership and the periodicity of elections. Another subject of study will be the association of Members of Parliament and State legislatures with Panchayati Raj bodies.

* * *

CHEAP POWER TILLER DEVELOPED

THE CENTRAL Tractor Training and Testing Station at Bundi, Madhya Pradesh, has developed a 7 h.p. power tiller suitable for different agricultural operations on small holdings. It can also serve as a power unit for pumping, winnowing and other farm work. The hand-operated tiller is estimated to cost about Rs. 2,000. It can run on petrol or kerosene. Fuel consumption is low, working out to approximately three gallons for eight hours on the field. The engine and all other components used are manufactured in India.

The newly developed Baby Tractor

NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

WHILE THE Co-operation Department of the Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation will have overall responsibility for initiating policies and programmes, the newly set up National Co-operative Development Corporation will function as an effective agency for the implementation of the programmes. The Corporation will take up in an increasing measure the responsibility for continuous follow-up action, which will involve (a) maintaining effective contact with the problems in the field, (b) effective liaison with the State Governments and the state co-operative structure, (c) undertake periodical studies for reviewing the progress made, and (d) make available adequate material based on field study and contacts which can serve as the basis in the formulation of new policies and programmes and modification of existing ones by the Ministry.

* * *

CO-OPERATIVE PROCESSING PROGRAMME TO BE ENLARGED

THE UNION Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has requested the State Governments to take effective action to develop

co-operative marketing and processing in general and link co-operative credit with marketing in particular. Special efforts to develop co-operative marketing have been considered necessary in order to cope with the rapid expansion of co-operative credit. It is feared that one of the factors responsible for the limited progress of co-operative marketing of agricultural produce is the inadequate development of co-operative processing. The Fourth Indian Co-operative Congress, held recently in Delhi, considered the specific measures necessary for promoting co-operative marketing of agricultural produce. It observed that the importance of encouraging co-operative processing lies not only in its adding strength and stability to the credit and marketing system but also in enabling the cultivator to increase his income. The Union Ministry has, therefore, requested the State Governments to review the working of the existing processing units in the co-operative sector with a view to strengthening their activities and also to consider enlarging the programme for organising more processing units.

* * *

EXEMPTION FROM SALES TAX

THE UNION Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has requested the State Governments to consider steps to exempt co-operative marketing societies from sales and purchase tax in respect of the produce handled by them. It has been noticed that levy of sales tax was one of the major impediments in the way of the speedy development of co-operative marketing. While considering this question, the Planning Commission, in consultation with Food and Agriculture Ministry, the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation and the Reserve Bank of India, came to the conclusion that the transactions of co-operative societies in respect of the members' produce should be exempt from sales and purchase tax.

* * *

PRICE FLUCTUATION FUND

THE NATIONAL Co-operative Development Corporation has decided that the proposal to create a special price fluctuation fund at the level of marketing societies with Government contribution should be given a fair trial. This is in keeping with the recommendation made at the last All-India Co-operation Ministers' Conference at Lucknow. The object of this fund is to enable the marketing societies to purchase outright the produce belonging to small cultivators.

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COOPERATIVE COUNCILS FOR STATES

The Government of India have requested all State Governments to form State Cooperative Councils, which will include non-official cooperators and experts in cooperation. Formation of such councils was recommended by a Working Group of the Fourth Cooperative Congress held in November, 1963. The Congress had recommended that such councils and cooperative unions should be actively associated with the preparation and enforcement of Cooperative Acts, Bills and Rules "to ensure the preservation of the voluntary and democratic character of the movement." The Government of India have accepted the recommendation and requested the State authorities to take suitable action for its implementation.

INTER-UNIVERSITY DEBATE ON PANCHAYATI RAJ

(Continued from page 11)

activities which provide the social base to political democracy. In U.S.S.R., it is the Soviets which were part and parcel of the social structure of the medieval era that have formed the base of the new socialist democratic structure. Likewise, the Village Panchayats of old which were primarily based on caste groupings in ancient India, may now constitute the essential base of political democracy in our country. Panchayati Raj may, therefore, be called "Old wine in new bottles". It is an experiment worth making and there is every likelihood of its success since it fits in with our age-old cultural traditions and is at the same time in tune with the latest developments of the modern age of science.

STATE DIRECTORS OF INFORMATION MEET

(*Continued from page 12*)

NEED OF THE HOUR

But perhaps a point that was missed in the din and dust of arguments was that once the dire necessity of gearing up the publicity apparatus to educate the rural mass mind in terms of specific achievements and their requirements was realised, the limitations of finances and organisation would not prove as big a hurdle as it loomed at present. If the existing publicity apparatus from the Centre to the District level belonging to various organisations were pooled, they would perhaps prove equal to the task. For instance, if each of the Editors of Panchayati Raj at the Central and State levels, each Field Publicity Organiser of the Five Year Plan Publicity Organisation, Ministry of I & B and the District Information Officers of the State Publicity Departments produced one success story each month, there would be enough material to go round. But all this required to be pooled and utilised after being suitably translated into the rest of the languages. What was needed was an efficient Translating Bureau to do justice to the stories received fresh from the ground from all over the countryside. A part or whole of this burden could be shouldered by the existing machinery of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. Similarly, The Drama and Song Division, at the Centre and the Films Division with their counterparts at the State levels could pool all their resources together to achieve the desired results. The crying need of the hour was not to increase the staff so much at various levels as to pool the existing resources to utilise them to the best advantage of the publicity needs of the rural areas.

INDIA'S BEST VILLAGE OF THE YEAR

(*Continued from page 4*)

It is the spirit of self sacrifice and service which is largely responsible for this alround improvement. There was no school worth the name in the village. Funds were raised for building the school but the biggest difficulty was lack of a proper site. A levelled ground near the village seemed to serve the purpose very well but it was occupied by some of the villagers for winnowing grain at the time of harvesting. But as soon as the occupants of the site learnt of the proposal to construct the school, they immediately vacated the place. Today, a majestic eight-room school building with a play ground, stands there.

With the increase in per capita income in the village, a pertinent question comes to mind as to how the villagers are going to spend that money. One being asked, the Chairman of the Service Co-operative promptly replied, "We shall invest the extra money in the Insurance scheme. This will not only help us individually but also augment the income of the village Panchayat." The determination with which he said this is a clear indication of their steady march to progress and prosperity.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

In order to make 'Panchayati Raj' journal an effective forum of field activities and experiences, contributions in the form of letters and articles are invited, particularly from the functionaries in the field like Gram Sevaks, Extension Officers and Block Development Officers for which they are paid at the rate of Rs. 5 per letter and Rs. 20 per thousand words for articles. As they are State officials, it is necessary for them to obtain permission from their Heads of Departments for the acceptance of the honorarium. However, in order to help them share their experiences through the forum of this journal, the Development Commissioners have been requested by the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation to exempt them from seeking permission for the acceptance of payment of their contributions published in this journal.

L186DPD/63—GIPF

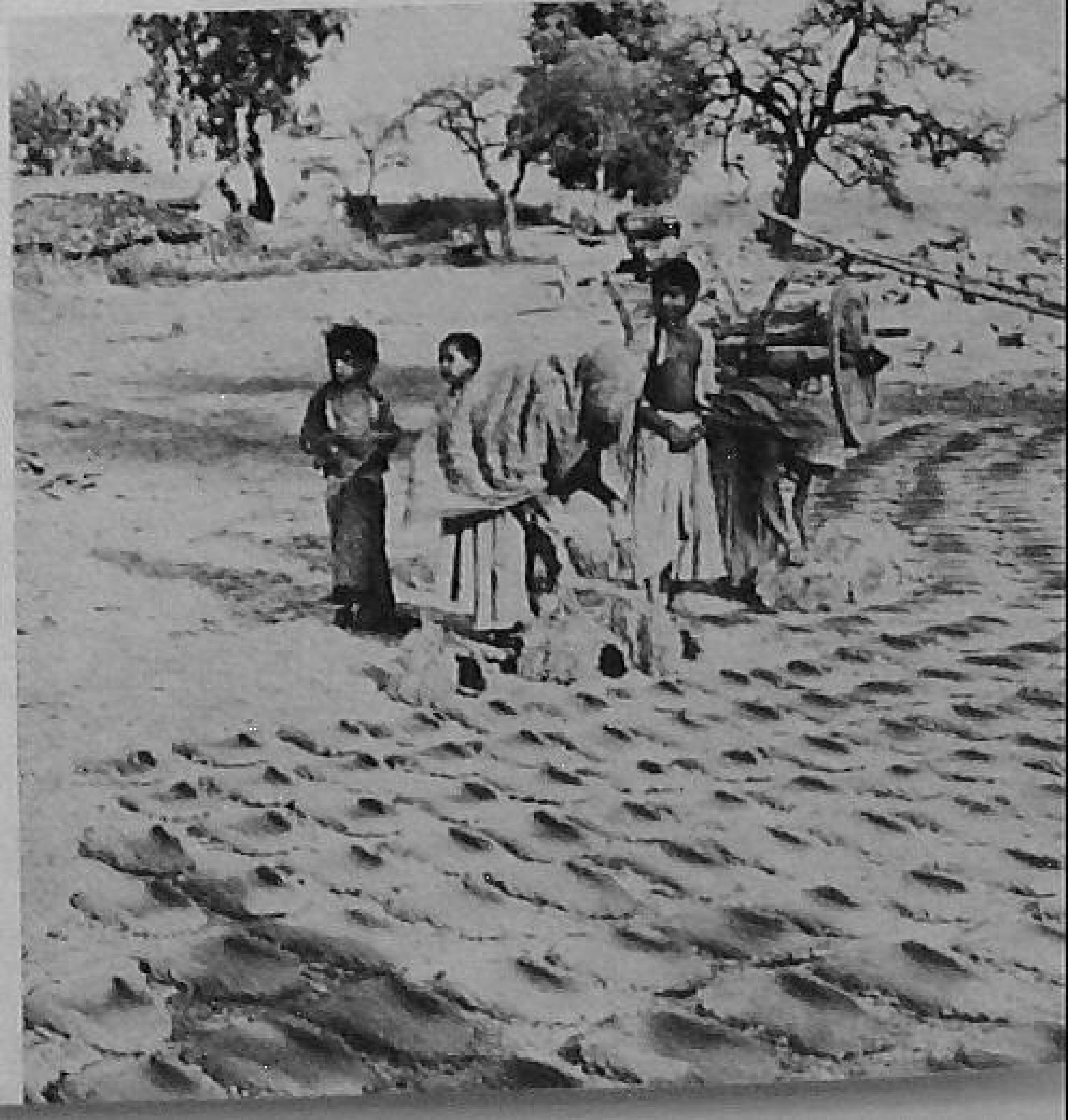
A view of the bullock power in action on community basis.

Some of the members have taken to tanning by improved techniques to augment their income.

JOINT FARMING SOCIETY AT MURLIKHED

Another view of tanning by improved method.

A view of tiles made by the members of the Socie



READY FOR MARKETING—*Bunches of banana fruits being weighed by a Primary Fruit Sale Society at a roadside village in Maharashtra State before they are loaded in the truck for marketing.*

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